

Series: Isaiah
Title: Straying Sheep and our Shepherd
Text: Isaiah 53: 6
Date: November 24, 2013
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our text is Isaiah 53:6. We have here, **Straying Sheep and Our Shepherd (title)**

Proposition: Believer, God has laid on Christ the iniquity of all God's elect, including every sin of every individual child of God, therefore by Christ bearing our iniquity away, we are alive to serve him forever!

I. FIRST, A GENERAL CONFESSION TRUE OF ALL GOD'S ELECT, WHICH WE CONFESS TO BE TRUE OF US ALL TOGETHER--"ALL WE like sheep have gone astray"

The ones making this confession are Christ's sheep—the elect of God. Christ said, "I lay down my life for the sheep." (Jn 10: 15) Those God chose unto salvation in Christ before the foundation of the world are Christ's sheep. The elect only are the sheep. Christ laid down his life only for the sheep. Only those who are the sheep will honestly make this confession about ourselves—"ALL WE like sheep HAVE GONE ASTRAY."

In the beginning, in the garden, we were the sheep of God, of Christ our Shepherd. Christ our God was our Shepherd, even then. Peter said, 1 Peter 2:25, "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now RETURNED unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." That means we were with him before. The garden with God as our God was our green pasture: we had Light, Life, Fellowship, Communion with God because God our Shepherd was all of those things to us.

The law of God was the hedge around our green pasture. Adam's good, his safety, was to stay near to God, to obey God. To stray from God, to disobey God, meant certain death for him and for all those who would come from him—you and me.

Therefore, when Adam transgressed that one law in the garden, in him, ALL WE broke through the hedge, ALL WE like sheep, went astray. Therefore in Adam, ALL WE died. We were severed from God our Life and from God our Light.

Romans 5: 12: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

What a proper comparison to describe us as sheep—we are dumb like sheep, in constant need of a shepherd like sheep. Spurgeon said, "Sheep are dishonored by the comparison."

Someone might say, "Well, if Christ was our Shepherd even then, why did he allow us to stray?" According to God's determinate counsel and foreordination, according to his eternal purpose, God our Shepherd allowed us to stray. First, to show us what we are if left to ourselves—we need a Shepherd to keep us. Secondly, it was to manifest his glory in our salvation. God was not to blame for our straying, only we are to blame,

Ecclesiastes 7:29: Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but THEY have sought out many inventions.

So our text says that all are guilty—there are no exceptions—this is the general confession of all Christ's sheep--"ALL WE, like sheep, HAVE GONE ASTRAY" Is there not one among all Christ's sheep that is good. God said, Psalm 14:3: They are all gone aside, they are ALL TOGETHER become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

II. SECONDLY, IT GETS PERSONAL. HERE IS A PERSONAL CONFESSION WHICH EACH INDIVIDUAL ELECT CHILD OF GOD SAYS OF OURSELVES, PERSONALLY,--“We have turned every ONE to HIS OWN way”

As soon as we were born of Adam’s corrupt seed, we each, individually, personally, **turned every one to his own way.**

Psalms 58:3: The wicked are estranged from the womb: **THEY** go **ASTRAY** as soon as **THEY** be born, speaking lies.

Each of us, every one, chose “a way”, which personally seemed right to us.

Proverbs 14:12: There is **a way** which seemeth right unto **a man**,

You chose a way that seemed right to you, I chose a way that seemed right to me, another chose a way that seemed right to him. There are as many different, individual false ways, as there are sinners.

One chose a way called “immoral sin.” One resolved within himself, “I only have so long on this earth so it seemeth right to me that I should kick up my heels and live my life in immoral decadence all my days.” And there are as many different ways to indulge in this path as there are sinners in this world—each chooses his own way.

Another man chose the way of “moral sin.” There are as many different ways to indulge in this way as there are sinners, as well. For instance, one chose a life of morality. He hopes his good will outweigh his bad. He had no concept that God is holy, that he is guilty and that God will be no means clear the guilty

Another chose a way that seemed right to him--“his personal decision for the god of his imagination.” The way that seemeth right to this man was to “let his powerless god have his way and to save him.” This man is his own god. He trusts in his own will. He has no idea that God is absolutely sovereign to do as he pleases and is just to do so with us for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God

Illustration: Sheep will stray away from their shepherd but they cannot discern the way back so they will not return of themselves. In that regard, sheep are dumber than an ox or an ass. We, like sheep, are just that dumb. Of our own will, we went astray from God but we will not, of our own will, return to God. A sinner has no spiritual discernment, so of his own will, a sinner will not return to God. God said,

Isaiah 1:3: The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Furthermore, Christ said our unbelief is sin. To say a man can, of his own will return to God, is to say he can put away his own sin. God says it cannot be done. Christ “knowing us”, intimately, becoming one with us in the new birth as a husband his bride, is how we are born of God, made willing in the day of his power and irresistibly drawn to Christ in faith.

John 10: 27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

So in the end, Christ will say to the man trusting in his own will, “Depart from me, ye worker of iniquity, I never **KNEW** you.”

Another chose a way called “keeping the law—self-justification”, self-sanctification.” The law given at Mt. Sinai—including the ten commandments—were given to show God’s people our sins, not for us to attempt to justify or sanctify ourselves by the law.

Romans 3; 19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Galatians 3:3: Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

So in the end this man will try to enter not wearing the wedding garment—Christ our Righteousness. There are many more ways men chose but you get the point, **“we have turned every one to his own way”**

Yet, when you take each individual sinner’s personal way, God says together they are all “the ways of death.”

Proverbs 14:12: There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Christ Jesus said, “I am THE WAY!” There is only one Way.

John 5: 39: Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40: And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

This is what each individual child of God confesses about ourselves personally. We have turned every one to his own way. The sinner who will not confess this to be true about himself is dead in his sins, without the word of God abiding in him.

1 John 1: 10: If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

III. SO GOD, IN GREAT GRACE AND MERCY TOWARD HIS ELECT, DID THIS GREAT THING—THIS IS THE GOSPEL ITSELF--“The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Together, all we like sheep have gone astray and the LORD laid on Christ the iniquity of all his elect sheep. Individually, personally, we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD laid on Christ the individual, personal iniquity of each one of his elect sheep.

First, notice who did this—**“the LORD hath...”** It means the triune God hath and it means Christ who is the fullness of the Godhead bodily willingly did this. Think of that! Repentance and faith does not do this—“the LORD hath.” This is not done when the believer is called out of darkness into his marvelous light—“the LORD hath.” This is not something done repeatedly—“the LORD hath”. It was done once and the work is finished.

Secondly, notice who the substitute is taking the place of God’s elect—**“The LORD hath laid on him”**—on Christ. Christ Jesus is the Substitute Lamb that God himself provided for all God’s elect and for each elect child individually. The first head and representative of God’s elect was a man, the last head and representative was a man.

1 Corinthians 15:21: For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

Now, see what was laid on our Substitute—**“the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity.”** What does it say and what does it not say? It says, “The Lord laid on him the iniquity.” Punishment followed, but not before the iniquity itself was laid on him. When God says, he laid on him the iniquity, then that is what God did. The Holy Spirit does not say, it were *as if* the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity. It says, “the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity.” To bear the iniquity of God’s elect in his own body unto death is the very purpose for which God gave the Son of God a human body.

Hebrews 10: 4: For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5: Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou

prepared me: 6: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7: Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Hebrews 2: 9: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every [chosen child of God.] 10: For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11: For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,...

Next, note whose iniquity was laid on him?—**“the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”** Of course this means all the sheep, the elect of God, those ordained to eternal life by God the Father.

Christ Jesus, the GodMan, never committed transgression. He came into this world to fulfill the law, and he fulfilled the whole law. Christ Jesus as a man, made under the law, was examined by the law and found just.

Isaiah 42: 21: The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake;

But he came into this earth to “magnify the law, and make it honourable” for his people (Is 42: 21)—that God might be just and the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. (Rom 3: 26)

Therefore, when the hour was come, being the only righteous One—without spot and without blemish—Christ Jesus was the only one fit Lamb to bear the sins of his people.

1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

So he willingly gave his body, as the substitute Lamb, to bear the iniquity of his people and thus justly bear our judgment—the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Men say, it means he was made a “sin offering” for us. Indeed, he did make his soul an offering for sin. But the word “sin” is the antithesis to the word “righteousness”. If you make that word to be “sin offering” then the antithesis is destroyed. It means what it says, “he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

1 Peter 2:24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,...

Galatians 3:13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

God did not merely count him to have died for his people, Christ had to die for his people. And for God to be just to pour out judgment upon him, God did not only impute sin to him, God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin.

Brethren, do not miss the blessing of this truth, because of the smoke screens of Satan—your iniquity became Christ as truly as it was yours—not yours only but the iniquity of every chosen child of God. Each way we each chose, altogether were the ways of death. The ways we called just and righteous did not equate with God’s definition of justice and righteousness—but was iniquity. The ways we called holy did not equate with God’s definition of holiness—but was iniquity. And all our iniquities can all be traced back to one transgression in the garden—the sin, the iniquity of Adam. So the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Of Adam’s iniquity and of all our iniquities personally—all made one mass & laid it on Christ.

Take all our various ways—compare them to a number of paths that no man can number because God's elect make a number no man can number. Picture all our ways—criss-crossing this globe, innumerable inequities—sins of every kind and every degree of every elect child of God past, present and future of all our sins past, present and future. The LORD brought all our ways to converge from the north, south, east and west into one giant mass of iniquity and made it converge and meet upon one—Christ Jesus our Substitute—the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Picture a tall mountain. Behold, coming down the side of that mountain streams from every direction. All those streams flow down to converge into one giant stream, and it all dumps into one lake at the bottom of the mountain. All those streams are the iniquities of us all—all God's elect past, present and future—all of our personally iniquities. The LORD made all the personal iniquities of every elect child of God to converge into one giant river of iniquity and the whole load to dump upon our sinless Substitute--the LORD hath laid on him THE INIQUITY of us all.

Under the Old Testament—in the type—and it was only a type not the express image—but in the type we read,

Leviticus 16:21: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: 22: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

More expressly than that which Aaron did only ceremonially upon the scape goat, Christ Jesus our great High Priest, who is himself the LORD, laid on him the iniquity of all his elect people. All the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins did he put upon his own head—and he owned them to be his own. Being the only fit man who himself could take our sins away, Christ bore upon him all our iniquities unto a land not inhabited—v8: "he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken." v5: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities". V8:...for the transgression of my people was he stricken".

Now brethren, by his stripes we are healed! God raised him from dead declaring before the whole earth—justice is satisfied: propitiation has been made. God is Just and the justifier of all who believe on Jesus Christ the Lord (Romans 3: 25-27.)

Jeremiah 50:20: In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

Christ our Shepherd came looking for us and gathered us and made us born-again of incorruptible Seed by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. He taught us this good news and made us willing to believe him and to abide in him. Why? He did so that we might not henceforth live unto ourselves but unto him.

1 Peter 2:24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto Righteousness: [that we should live unto the LORD our Righteousness] by Whose stripes ye were healed. 25: For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now RETURNED unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

Luke 1:74: That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75: In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

Believer, Christ was not made a sinner, he was made sin. And thus by his cross-work, and by his work in our hearts, we are not merely made holy and righteous, but we are made “holiness and righteousness,” “created anew in righteousness and true holiness,” even “the righteousness and holiness of God.”

Psalm 32: 1: «A *Psalm* of David, Maschil.» Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, *whose sin is* covered. 2: Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, AND in whose spirit *there is* no guile.

In our spirit we have been made as he is—that is why we serve him in the new man without fear. And one day in our body and spirit we shall be perfectly conformed to his image. He saved us that we should serve him all the days of our life. Believer, how long are the days of our life? The flesh is grass. It shall wither and die. But the word of the Lord—by which your new man is alive—liveth and abideth FOREVER! We shall serve him from now until forever!

Brethren, live your life reverencing God but not fearing God, do so in thankful adoration, praising him that he hath laid on our Shepherd the iniquity of all us straying sheep!

Amen!